

**I CLAIM:**

1. A knife sharpener comprising:

a housing including at least one access slot formed therein for receiving a knife blade to be sharpened, said at least one access  
5 slot of said housing including an intermediate portion and two end portions,

at least one grinding wheel rotatably received in said housing, and disposed close to said at least one access slot of said housing, for grinding and sharpening a cutting edge of the knife  
10 blade, and

means for driving said at least one grinding wheel to sharpen the knife blade, and

said housing including at least one opening formed therein, and formed in either of said end portions of said at least one access  
15 slot of said housing, and communicating with said at least one access slot of said housing, and including a width greater than that of said end portions of said at least one access slot of said housing, for receiving the cutting edge of the knife blade, and for preventing the cutting edge of the knife blade from being engaged with said  
20 housing after the cutting edge of the knife blade has been sharpened by said at least one grinding wheel.

2. The knife sharpener as claimed in claim 1, wherein said end portions of said at least one access slot of said housing is narrower than said intermediate portion of said at least one access slot of said  
25 housing, and said at least one opening of said housing is formed in either of said narrower end portions of said at least one access slot of said housing.

3. The knife sharpener as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one opening of said housing includes a circular shape.

4. The knife sharpener as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one opening of said housing includes a rectangular shape.

5. The knife sharpener as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one opening of said housing is formed in a first end portion of said end portions of said at least one access slot of said housing, and said housing includes a second opening formed in a second end portion of said end portions of said at least one access slot of said housing, and communicating with said at least one access slot of said housing, and having a width greater than that of said end portions of said at least one access slot of said housing, for receiving and protecting the cutting edge of the knife blade.

6. The knife sharpener as claimed in claim 5, wherein said end portions of said at least one access slot of said housing is narrower than said intermediate portion of said at least one access slot of said housing, and said second opening of said housing is formed in said narrower second end portion of said at least one access slot of said housing.

7. The knife sharpener as claimed in claim 5, wherein said second opening of said housing includes a circular shape.

8. The knife sharpener as claimed in claim 5, wherein said second opening of said housing includes a rectangular shape.